



# Printers at the ready

You can pay anything from £50 to more than £200 for a computer printer. Our tests help you pick the best one for your needs

**Q**uality and speed of printing are major factors in how useful you'll find a printer. Speed differences are particularly dramatic when printing photos; the quickest Best Buy inkjet we tested took 18 minutes to print 20 6x4-inch photos. The slowest took three-and-a-half hours to print the same pictures.

Before we recommend a printer as a Best Buy, we spend eight weeks testing it at the Which? lab.

We run extensive tests to measure print-quality and ink-consumption, and spend hours with a stopwatch recording how long it takes to print a huge array of documents.

## Speedy lasers

When printing text documents, laser printers are, on average, twice as fast as inkjets, but they're unsuitable for printing photos and can cost over £200 to buy, while toner cartridges can also work out expensive to replace.

We've found that a typical laser printer

will print around 12 pages of A4 text in one minute. So, if you run a business from home, or you regularly print lengthy documents, a laser printer is worth considering.

## Versatile inkjets

Inkjet printers are more versatile than laser printers because they can print photographs. All-in-one models can also scan and photocopy documents – laser all-in-ones are more expensive than inkjets.

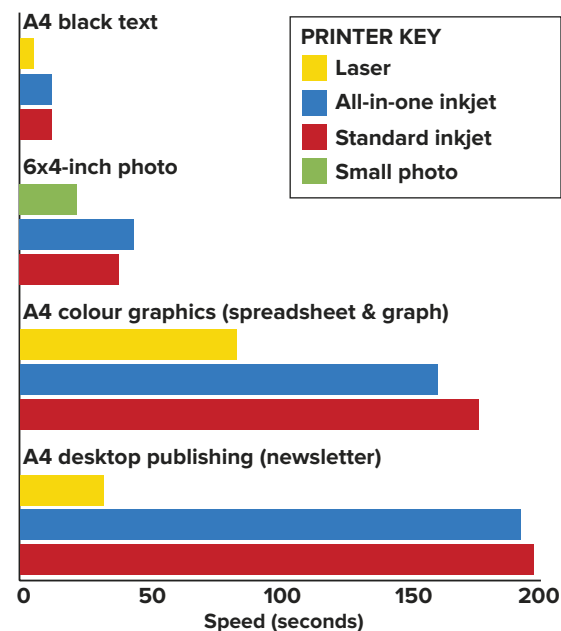
The downside to an inkjet's versatility means you sometimes have to compromise between speed and quality.

It's worth remembering that, for any type of printer, the manufacturer's predicted speed is often based on 'draft-quality' documents. Our graph (right) and star ratings (in the table) reveal which of the latest printers are the quickest in reality.

Full test results for more than 100 printers can be found at [www.which.co.uk/printers](http://www.which.co.uk/printers).

## PRINT SPEEDS

Compare printer types for speed and versatility



All Best Buy inkjets print between six and seven pages of black text a minute. The **Brother HL-2170W** (see right) is a super-fast mono laser printer and can print 13 pages of black text a minute. There are bigger differences with printing photos – the Best Buy Epson Stylus Photo PX700FW (see [www.which.co.uk/EpsonPX700FW](http://www.which.co.uk/EpsonPX700FW)) is particularly speedy, printing two 6x4-inch images in just over a minute.

Figures are an average of all printers tested in 2009. Times for text documents are calculated from five-page print runs. Although lasers are quicker at printing, they take slightly longer to start printing than inkjets thanks to the time taken to warm up.



## INKJET ALL-IN-ONE

## Epson PX800FW

£215

Which? test score **68%**

**PROS** A top-of-the-range model that prints good-quality images. Has a built-in fax, auto document feeder, Wi-Fi, scanner and copier. This machine can print photos from a memory card or a PictBridge-enabled camera.

**CONS** Text printing was below average quality in our tests and it's expensive.

Full review at [www.which.co.uk/epsonpx800fw](http://www.which.co.uk/epsonpx800fw)

Photo printing from memory card Yes Connectivity Wi-Fi, Ethernet and USB Cheapest Online



## LASER

## Brother HL-2170W

£155

Which? test score **70%**

**PROS** This machine prints incredibly sharp, clean text quickly and it's surprisingly cheap. Good at converting colour graphics into black and white. Easy to use, and the paper tray can hold 250 pages.

**CONS** Like all lasers, the cooling fan makes it noisy and it can't print photos.

Full review at [www.which.co.uk/BrotherHL2170W](http://www.which.co.uk/BrotherHL2170W)

Photo printing from memory card No Connectivity Wi-Fi, Ethernet and USB Cheapest at Staples Also available Online



## SMALL PHOTO

## Canon Selphy CP760

£78

Which? test score **71%**

**PROS** A compact small photo printer that's fast, easy to use and produces good-quality postcard-size prints. Takes a range of memory cards and can print directly from a PictBridge-enabled digital camera or from a computer.

**CONS** Printer labels can be hard to read. No handle. Can't operate on battery power.

Full review at [www.which.co.uk/CanonCP760](http://www.which.co.uk/CanonCP760)

Photo printing from memory card Yes Connectivity USB Cheapest Argos Also available at PC World, Jessops, online

WHICH.CO.UK

Looking for a Best Buy laptop to sit next to your printer?

[www.which.co.uk/laptops](http://www.which.co.uk/laptops)

MODEL	SPECIFICATION				WHICH? TEST PERFORMANCE							SCORE %
	PRICE (£)	BLACK TEXT (£)	COLOUR GRAPHICS (£)	PHOTO (£)	TEXT QUALITY	TEXT SPEED	PHOTO QUALITY	PHOTO SPEED	SCANNING	COPYING	EASE OF USE	
ALL-IN-ONE INKJET												
EPSON PX800FW	215	0.04	0.20	0.98	★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	68
KODAK ESP 7	170	0.03	0.12	0.26	★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	61
BROTHER DCP-385C	78	0.05	0.27	1.53	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	57
CANON PIXMA MP240	60	0.06	0.22	0.60	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	56
EPSON STYLUS SX200	50	0.04	0.17	0.74	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	56
STANDARD INKJET												
CANON Pixma iP3600	62	0.05	0.18	0.59	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	n/a	n/a	★★★★	65
HP Deskjet D4360	60	0.06	0.19	0.93	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	n/a	n/a	★★★★	63
LASER												
BROTHER HL-2170W	155	0.02	0.06	n/a	★★★★★	★★★★★	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	★★★	70
SAMSUNG CLP-315	127	0.03	0.14	0.75	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★★	n/a	n/a	★★★★★	63
SMALL PHOTO												
CANON Selphy CP760	78	n/a	n/a	0.30	n/a	n/a	★★★★★	★★★★★	n/a	n/a	★★★★★	71
CANON Selphy ES30	111	n/a	n/a	0.30	n/a	n/a	★★★★★	★★★★★	n/a	n/a	★★★★★	64

## USING THE TABLE

**Specification** Price See p29. **Black text/Colour graphics/Photo (£)** Cost of ink per page printed before cartridge(s) ran out.

## Test performance

**Text quality** Rating for printing A4 page of black-and-white text. **Text speed** Five A4 text pages print in under 30

seconds to get ★★★★★. **Photo quality** Rating for printing an A4 photo. **Photo speed** An A4 photo prints in less than

60 seconds to achieve ★★★★★. ★ equals more than eight minutes. **Scanning** Speed and quality with different-sized items.

**Copying** Speed and quality with text, images and photos. **Ease of use** How easy the model is to set up, use, and maintain.